

Holiday Guide



September



Sun	Mon	Tues
3	4 <i>Labor Day</i>	5

Acquisition

☐ Focus on acquisition to build your lists

Implement new subscription strategies across as many channels as possible, prioritizing email and phone number collection together. Consider running a sweepstakes or a refer-a-friend program to grow your email and SMS subscriber lists.

☐ Perform list hygiene to remove inactive subscribers

Combine this with running a re-engagement campaign to revitalize subscribers that have been disengaged the past several months, increasing your holiday reach.

☐ Implement new/optimize existing automated campaigns to build up cross-channel traffic

Think: Welcome Series, Browse Abandonment, Shopping Cart Abandonment, Post Purchase, Alerts Suite, and Recurring Automated Campaigns.

Messaging

☐ Set the framework for broadcast messaging calendars for the rest of the year

Plan for 'oops' messages, confirm shipping deadlines with your procurement team, set your promo/sale calendars, etc.

☐ Implement transactional messaging

Collect opt-in for transactional messaging during the checkout process and begin triggering order, shipping, and delivery confirmations via text and email to build up channel awareness. Consider applying a pre-check to the existing email subscription opt-in box found in the webstore check-out flow.

☐ Begin increasing broadcast frequency

Target two full-list sends a week and send additional broadcasts with activity-based segmentation.

Conversational Messaging

☐ Begin monitoring inbound messaging in Two-Way SMS Conversations console

Understand what types of questions and issues subscribers have in order to inform plans and other teams.

Audits

☐ Perform technical audit of program

Confirm all subscription points are functioning, validate conversion tracking, ensure browsing and cart tracking is in place, and test transactional and automated campaign triggering prior to any code freeze windows.

☐ Perform competitive audit

Evaluate competitors promotional % usage, campaign approach and overall strategy. Study past emails and text messages, as well as your competitors to see what buzzwords and offers work best.

☐ Perform audit of last year's holiday performance

Review top-performing campaigns for copy, timing, and strategy trends and identify messages that did not produce engagement or revenue.

☐ Perform compliance audit of Text Message Marketing program

Review your SMS opt-in calls to action for compliance requirements, including proper disclaimer language. Additionally confirm your System Messages have accurate contact information for HELP and INFO.

☐ Create saved content blocks promoting payment options

If you offer financing through a store credit card or partnership with AfterPay, Sezzle, etc., create a saved content block that can be used throughout all your messaging. Confirm any legal terminology that may need to be included. Promote gift cards in all marketing messages, as well.

☐ Coupon check

Double check your unique coupon pool setup to ensure they're full and that the threshold notifications are configured to be sent to the correct contacts for when they get low.

Design

☐ Build out holiday campaign ideas

Start prepping creative to have a holiday look and feel that is on-brand yet captures the holiday spirit for all winter holidays, not just Christmas. Here are a few tips & tricks:

- If you use a holiday palette, make sure it's harmonious with your brand colors. Don't think you have to stick with red and green!
- Make sure to keep holiday design consistent for brand awareness. (Consider updating all evergreen campaigns with holiday branding for this period, too.)
- You don't have to go crazy! Sometimes less is more – small touches and details. Sensory overload is a thing.
- Utilize saved content – build elements that will be used frequently within saved content so it can be easily added into campaigns and easily updated (e.g., holiday headers & footers, shipping updated, promotions, etc.)

☐ A/B split test email & SMS message content strategies

If you haven't already, start figuring out what resonates best with your audience. Does using first-name personalization increase your open rates? What gets the best conversion rate: SMS or MMS? Does "my" or "your" language get the best engagement in your calls to action?

October



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
8	9 <i>Canadian Thanksgiving</i>	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 <i>Halloween</i>	1	2	3	4

☐ **Continue testing and program auditing**

Consider reducing the cadence of when pop-ups appear to visitors that didn't originally submit their email address or phone number.

☐ **Check and adjust frequency caps to allow for increased sending cadence**

This should include weekend sends. Be sure to monitor your list health and the amount of unsubscribes.

☐ **Unsubscribe true “dead weight” contacts**

These contacts should be identified from your re-engagement campaign and should either be unsubscribed or messaged with “winback” type marketing only. Also look to do a soft bounce clean-up.

☐ **Finalize Black Friday and Cyber Monday promotions and prep messaging**

It's right around the corner! Here are a few suggestions to prepare:

- Prep product recommendations and merch block recipes for holiday specific categories or gift guides.
- Start pushing gift guides – guides based on gender, age group, price points, and/or categories (e.g., “For the gamer in your life” or “For the best chef you know”).
- Update message navigation/headers to account for holiday look/categories.
- Use urgency within your messaging.
- Personalize with focus on categories they've purchased or browsed before.
- Review post purchase and transactional messages to fit your Black Friday & Cyber Monday strategy – add/remove incentives, include important shipping updates, build your SMS list, etc.
- Create one-off segmentation for holiday-specific audiences that look to leverage holiday purchasers from years past (i.e. Holiday purchasers over the past 3 years)

November



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 <i>Columbus Day</i>	10	11 <i>Veterans Day</i> <i>Single's Day</i>
12 <i>Diwali</i>	13 <i>World Kindness Day</i>	14	15	16	17	18 <i>Friendsgiving</i>
19 <i>International Men's Day</i>	20	21	22	23 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	24 <i>Black Friday</i>	25 <i>Small Business Saturday</i>
26 <i>Artists Sunday</i>	27 <i>Cyber Monday</i>	28 <i>Giving Tuesday</i>	29	30	1	2

☐ Target full-list broadcasts as much as possible

Time messages before the start of the hour or at the half hour to stand out, and consider segmented extension/last chance messages. Ensure text messages aren't sent during regulated "quiet hours" to maintain compliance and engagement.

☐ Coordinate marketing efforts across all channels

Align mobile, email, and social to reinforce messaging and extend reach.

☐ Have 'oops' messages built and ready

Draft 'oops' message copy for major sales + Black Friday, Cyber Monday/Week, Super Saturday, shipping deadlines, website errors, etc.

☐ Promote exclusive SMS-only or app-only sales in email, with signup for additional channels

☐ Promote your loyalty program

Take advantage of the influx of traffic and consider running a special offer for those who join your loyalty program during Black Friday or Cyber Monday. You may even make this a recurring weekly campaign for new subscribers who aren't signed up.

December



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
3	4	5	6	7 <i>Hanukkah Begins</i>	8	9
10	11 <i>Green Monday</i>	12	13	14	15 <i>Hanukkah Ends</i>	16
17	18 <i>USPS Advanced Ground Shipping Deadline</i> <i>UPS Ground Shipping Deadline</i>	19 <i>USPS First Class Mail Shipping Deadline</i>	20 <i>USPS Priority Mail Shipping Deadline</i> <i>UPS 3-Day Select Shipping Deadline</i>	21 <i>First Day of Winter</i> <i>UPS 2-Day Air Shipping Deadline</i>	22 <i>UPS Next Day Air Shipping Deadline</i>	23 <i>Super Saturday</i> <i>Gift Card Day</i>
24 <i>Christmas Eve</i>	25 <i>Christmas Day</i>	26 <i>Boxing Day</i> <i>Kwanzaa Begins</i>	27	28	29	30

☐ Continue sending broadcasts past peak shopping days

Target two full-list sends a week and send additional broadcasts with activity-based segmentation. Even dare to send daily! Do not drop off in send cadence.

☐ Continue to highlight shipping dates and deadlines, and social campaigns from November

☐ Promote Gift Cards

Remind your customers that gift cards are still available, before the shipping cutoff and even after the cutoff has passed. Also, promote self-gifting or “treat yourself!” gift card opportunities to shoppers for that last-minute gift to themselves.

☐ Have a brick & mortar? Highlight store information

As ecommerce shipping windows close to deliver in time for Christmas, plan on highlighting your store locator, extended holiday hours, BOPIS (buy online, pick up in store), and reasons to experience the brand store.

☐ Close the 2023 Year

Consider a year-in-review wrap-up campaign to engage consumers. These types of campaigns tend to get a lot of engagement.

- Highlight your “top products of 2023 in a countdown manner. Highlight your most popular content (e.g., most read blogs, favorite recipes, top social

- Highlight your most popular content (e.g., most read blogs, favorite recipes, top social media posts, etc.)

- Show your goodwill and environmental impact (e.g., money donated, trees planted, % of materials that were recyclable, etc.)

- Dynamically pull in stats for the consumer (e.g., how many purchases they made, what their favorite order was, how long they biked, their top reviewed styles, etc.)

- Celebrate any changes to your brand (e.g., new stores, new product lines, new partners, etc.)

☐ Make updates for 2024

Think: new coupon pools for evergreen incentives, updated creative on annual campaigns like Birthday, Loyalty, Anniversary, Post Purchase, etc.

January



Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>	1 <i>New Year's Day</i> <i>Kwanzaa Ends</i> <i>New Year's Resolution Week (1/1-1/7)</i>	2	3	4	5	6

☐ **Update evergreen campaigns that had holiday messaging**

You may need to remove shipping banners or any mention of the holidays. Perform an audit on your website as well to take down holiday-related content.

☐ **Review automated campaigns that had holiday changes**

Perform an audit on your automated messages to ensure any shortened wait steps or changes in coupon distribution have been updated back to its previous format.

☐ **Export campaign performance data and conduct a post-season audit**

Review for post-holiday optimization opportunities and retain to audit and prep for next holiday season.

☐ **Foster those who purchased during the holidays**

- Promote your easy return policies.
- Use predictive content to deliver product use guides and other relevant content based on what they purchased.
- Request, and then promote, product reviews.
- Promote your social media channels so they'll stay in touch and tag their purchases for additional user-generated content.

☐ **Build out post-holiday campaigns to engage post-holiday buyers**

- Send deep discounts to holiday abandoners.
- Implement the user-generated content you've gathered throughout the season
- Offer BOGO promotions to clear out excess inventory.
- Promote gift card redemption and remind customers who purchase gift cards that they have them.